

Cal/EPA Environmental Justice Action Plan
DTSC Pilot Project Update for West Oakland Forum
October 13, 2005

- I. Lead Agency:** Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)
- II. Project Area:** The community of West Oakland, Alameda County.
- Area Demographics:** 66% African American; 1% American Indian and Alaska Native; 7% Asian; 16% Latino (of any race); 11% white; Mean household income \$35,900; 40% living below the poverty level.
- III. Project Start Date:** May 2005
- IV. Project Summary:** The project will enhance the West Oakland's community role in local, state, and federal decision making regarding site-specific environmental clean-up activities. The Forum will facilitate information sharing between the community and government in order to provide a better agency understanding of the needs and concerns of the West Oakland community, which will result in more effective integration of community input into the decision-making process. Implementation of this project will result in a statewide model for community input into government decision-making regarding environmental clean-up activities, and will result in a site identification and clean-up process that addresses the concerns of West Oakland residents.
- V. Project Status:** DTSC identified and formed an internal staff team that is devoted to accomplishing the goals of this project. The internal staff team meets regularly to discuss and plan the upcoming operations and direction of the project as well as to discuss and evaluate past activities. In all activities to date, the Department of Toxic Substances Control has strived to ensure that the project is and remains community-driven.

Activities Completed:

- Established internal DTSC staff team; regular meeting dates identified
- Identified, contacted, and met with community members and community groups
- Signed a partnering agreement with West Oakland Toxic Reduction Collaborative (Collaborative)
- Collaborative and West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project (EIP) accepted DTSC Local Advisory Group concept as subcommittee of Collaborative; DTSC partnering with EIP for the West Oakland Local Advisory Group
- Met regularly with EIP team to discuss project goals/collaboration
- Attended EIP meeting to update community on past cleanup activities
- Continue to meet with community to rebuild relationship and to gain trust. The number of meetings may extend the original deadline dates, however DTSC feels it is important that the project be community driven.

- Developed/distributed Local Advisory Group membership applications
- DTSC and West Oakland EIP convened initial Local Advisory Group meeting in West Oakland on August 25, 2005

Future Activities:

- Plan and coordinate meetings with community members (EIP) and US EPA
- Next Local Advisory Group meeting is October 27th from 6 to 8 pm (tentative).
- Additional outreach to community for Local Advisory Group members
- Identify properties where environmental issues are a concern
- Develop of a priority list
- Coordinate with Local Advisory Group members on focus/goals of the Forum

VI. Challenges: Coordinating the many layers of government and community leaders involves significant staff time. Also, DTSC must overcome the significant community mistrust of government, and the Department which exists.

VII. Addressing Cumulative Impacts: DTSC has not arrived at the step of implementing cumulative impacts. However, DTSC did distribute the definition for the cumulative impacts at our first Local Advisory Group meeting on August 25.

VIII. Addressing Precautionary Approach: DTSC has not arrived at the step of implementing precautionary approach. However, DTSC did distribute the definition for the precautionary approach at our first Local Advisory Group meeting on August 25.

IX. Original Proposed Project End Date: December 2006. |

X. Revised Project End Date & Explanation for Delay in Timeline: March 2007.
In an effort to ensure the project is community driven, DTSC has worked closely with community members and community groups to identify goals and the structure of this pilot project. The effort involved many meetings and conversations to discuss past cleanup activities in the community, how decisions are made, how decisions can impact a community leadership, the structure and the focus of the Local Advisory Group, and building trust. DTSC believes the time put into this effort was worthwhile in that there is now a good working relationship with the community members, and a better mutual understanding of how the pilot project can be accomplished.

XI. For More Information:
Please direct comments & questions to:

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